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# The Depot Lunch Counter



Frank Dumont

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# The Depot Lunch Counter

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A Farce in One Act

BY

FRANK DUMONT

Author of "THE OLD NEW HAMPSHIRE HOME"  
"THE CASE OF SMYTH vs. SMITH," etc.



PHILADELPHIA  
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The Depot Lunch Counter

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# The Depot Lunch-Counter

## CHARACTERS

*(In the order of their entrance)*

FLORA FLIP . . . . .	<i>Who adorns the news stand</i>
CONDUCTOR . . . . .	<i>With a voice of his own</i>
PIPPINS . . . . .	<i>Manager of the lunch-counter</i>
HIST . . . . .	<i>The Mysterious Detective</i>
RUBE . . . . .	<i>An orphan boy (if anybody should ask you)</i>
U. B. QUICK . . . . .	<i>A passenger in a real hurry</i>
TWO MALE PASSENGERS . . . . .	<i>Who want lunch</i>
A CRIPPLE . . . . .	<i>Who stutters with his feet</i>
MOSES SLAVINSKY . . . . .	<i>A peddler</i>
BILES . . . . .	<i>Who stutters with his tongue</i>
A DEAF MAN . . . . .	<i>Who stutters with his ears</i>
KRONSKIPPEL . . . . .	<i>Who was born Dutch</i>
A WIDOW . . . . .	<i>But not defenseless</i>
MAMMA'S BOY . . . . .	<i>Large for his size</i>

PIPPINS may double one PASSENGER and KRONSKIPPEL; and QUICK may double CRIPPLE. BILES may double BOY. MOSES may double DEAF MAN. CONDUCTOR may double one PASSENGER. Arranged in this way the farce requires seven males and two females. It may also be played by nine males, if the cast includes a clever female impersonator for the part of FLORA.

TIME OF PLAYING:—Forty-five minutes (*or about one hour, including specialties indicated*).

## SYNOPSIS

PIPPINS, the manager of a depot lunch-counter, advertises for a boy to attend to the counter. RUBE, a country boy, takes the place. FLORA FLIP, who keeps the news stand, is interested in him from the start. RUBE shows how fast he can wait on people. He has trouble with a stuttering man, a deaf man, a cripple, and some others. He gets even with a German who wants to sample the pie before buying it. HIST, the detective, slides in and out mysteriously at odd moments, and finally proves that RUBE is the manager's long-lost son. RUBE and FLORA fall into each other's arms. The fun never stops for a moment.

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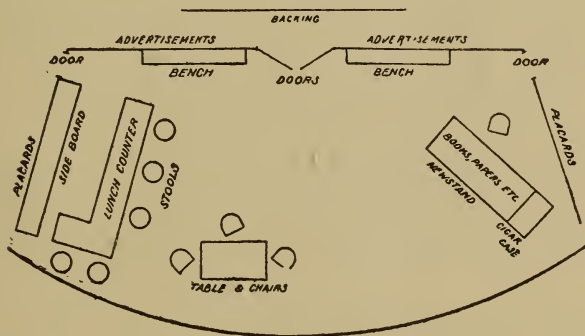
## COSTUMES

The costumes may be arranged to suit the taste of the actors, care being taken to make most of them exaggerated in style. RUBE should have red hair, and may be dressed in country style. He wears waiter's apron. FLORA should wear short skirt and apron. PIPPINS should wear a loud waistcoat and tie, and heavy jewelry. HIST, the detective, should have dark hair and mysterious appearance. He may put on a different sort of beard or moustache at each entrance, making them all look like obvious "disguises." KRONSKIPPEL should be stout. The WIDOW is stout, and wears black dress and bonnet. MAMMA'S BOY should be taller than the CONDUCTOR. He is dressed in an absurdly childish style. The CRIPPLE is elderly, and well dressed, but has one foot in bandages, as though suffering with gout.

## PROPERTIES

Cakes, sandwiches, slices of pie, large dinner bell, coffee urn (may be omitted), stools, bottles, cups, knives, forks, castors, loaves of bread, cane and ear trumpet for DEAF MAN, crutches and bandages for foot of CRIPPLE. Plenty of books, magazines, papers, bags of peanuts, and cigar boxes. One table, three chairs. Napkins, etc., on table. Benches for passengers, profile clock on wall, lots of placards as described. Railroad imitations off stage. If the clock (see description of scene) can be arranged so that the hands can be worked from behind scene and go around rapidly every time the CONDUCTOR enters, it will add to the fun. False hair, hairpins, chewing-gum, for FLORA. Money for PASSENGERS, MOSES and CRIPPLE. Peddler's outfit for MOSES. Duster and apron for RUBE. Cards and false beard and wig for HIST. Valise and coat for QUICK. Valises and packages for PASSENGERS. Placard reading "Boy Wanted" for PIPPINS. Two buttons, hairpin, money for KRONSKIPPEL.

## SCENE PLOT



SCENE.—Railway lunch-room. Door in flat c., and entrances also R. and L., as shown. Lunch-counter, stools, and sideboard (latter may be omitted) R. News stand L. Table and chairs down R. C. Benches against flat as shown (may be omitted). Landscape backing. Advertisements and placards, railway notices, etc., on walls, as shown. Clock on rear wall, to be arranged if possible so that hands can be worked rapidly from behind.





# The Depot Lunch-Counter

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SCENE.—*A plain chamber with doors c., to represent the lunch or waiting-room of a railway depot. Over door is a placard "To Trains." The doors may show landscape for backing. The lunch-counter is up and down stage R., with plenty of fruits, sandwiches, bags of peanuts, pies, bottles of catsup, knives, forks, plates and everything to indicate a railway lunch-counter. In front of this several high stools. Behind this counter is seen a sideboard or shelves with the coffee urn, plates, etc. On the walls are numerous placards announcing the refreshments, viz., "Pork and ——," "Pig's Tootsies," "Bosom of Veal," "Ox's Narrative," "Hot Butter," "Knife and fork 10 cts. extra," "Don't go elsewhere to be poisoned—eat here," etc., etc. On the walls up stage are railway maps, time-tables, excursion placards, etc., also a clock—painted or practicable. (See Properties.)*

(*At L., there is a counter for a news stand and cigar case. Plenty of magazines, newspapers and periodicals are displayed in front of and behind this news stand, which also shows candies and general items of a railway news stand and cigar counter combined. A cigar lighter may be at end of counter toward audience.*)

(*Two tables, nicely dressed for diners, are at R. C., with chairs at each table. These tables may have plates, forks, knives, water-bottles, menu cards, etc.*)

(*At opening of scene, railroad imitations are heard of trains arriving and departing, bell, whistle, etc. These are repeated from time to time when CONDUCTOR enters.*)

(*Music lively. FLORA FLIP, the girl at the news stand, is discovered arranging magazines, fixing her hair and humming. CONDUCTOR appears at door c. and shouts.*)

CONDUCTOR. Trains for the west go west, and trains for the east go to the east. Trains for the north and south go out on the railroad tracks. A-l-l aboard!

*(Rushes out.)*

FLORA. Gee, but that man's voice gets on my nerves. I'm going to ask the company to get a different conductor with a pleasant voice. How they can stand him I don't see. *(Imitates CONDUCTOR.)* Trains for Squedunk and Poketown. A-l-l-l aboard!

*(Still imitating CONDUCTOR, she rushes toward door C., and into the arms of PIPPINS, who is entering.)*

PIPPINS. Welcome, little stranger!

FLORA *(releasing herself, with dignity)*. Don't get gay, Mr. Pippins. That was just a slight *pas de tout* *(pronounced "pa de too")*.

PIPPINS. Oh, was that it? Well, I'll play Pa for you any day you like. Say, any boys turned up yet?

FLORA. No. Did you advertise?

PIPPINS. Sure. Well, I guess I'll hang up the placard again. *(Takes placard, "Boy Wanted," from counter, and hangs it on the wall near door.)* There, I hope we'll soon get somebody to look after this lunch-counter.

FLORA. Don't get a red-haired one.

PIPPINS. Why not, little one? *(Smiles at her.)*

FLORA *(pertly)*. Because he wouldn't suit my complexion—Poppa! *(PIPPINS pretends to wilt.)* Say, haven't you a boy of your own you could put in here to learn the business?

PIPPINS *(with melodramatic sadness)*. Alas, no! Me only son was stolen from me when he was yet a boy.

FLORA. Oh, pickles, ain't that terrible? And you don't know where he is?

PIPPINS. No; I have detectives on his trail, but so far he has never turned up.

FLORA. Why don't you hire Sherlock Holmes, or Ashton-Kirk, or one of those other big detectives?

*(HIST, the detective, glides in from L. Funny steps and mysterious antics as he grabs PIPPINS and FLORA by the hands and brings them down C.)*

HIST. Sh! Hush! Not a word. I have a clue—I'm on the track. Wait! Wait! Any minute may be our next!

(*More mysterious motions. Puts finger to lips and running around the tables he suddenly darts out R.*)

FLORA. My, that man frightened me out of a year's growth.

PIPPINS. I'll overtake him and find out more about that clue. This may be important. (*Runs out R.*)

FLORA. I'm getting startled so often that I'm sure I'll have nervous prostration if this keeps on. (*Goes behind her counter as RUBE, a country boy, appears door C. RUBE looks at the sign "Boy Wanted" several times, then he takes it down and throws it off R., then takes off his hat and hangs it up. He takes feather duster and begins dusting pies, cakes, etc.*) Well, look who's here! Wouldn't the nerve of that jar you? Hello, Sunset. Who do you think you are?

RUBE (*looking at her admiringly*). Oh, hello, Peaches. Say, you look good to me.

FLORA. Well, I'm not going to be good to you. Take it from me.

RUBE. Aw, say.

(*Looks at her and smiles. FLORA tries to be haughty, but breaks down and giggles.*)

FLORA. My, but you're the sassy thing. Who are you, anyway?

RUBE. Oh, I'm the new lunch-counter boy.

(*Dusts pies, etc.*)

(*Enter PIPPINS.*)

PIPPINS. Here, what are you doing at that lunch-counter?

RUBE. You put a sign out at that door, "Boy Wanted," didn't you?

PIPPINS. Yes.

RUBE. Well, I'm him!

PIPPINS. I like your cheek.

RUBE. I like your face. I like the other help we have here (*smiling at FLORA*), and I think I'll like the place.

(*Gets long apron from behind counter and puts it on.*)

PIPPINS. Did you ever work behind a lunch-counter? Ever sell pies?

RUBE. No. But I've eaten lots of them. Don't you worry about me, old man. I'm "it," every time!

PIPPINS. Well, can you talk and move fast? This business needs real action.

RUBE. Action! Say, that's my speci-al-ity!

*(Specialty here if desired, by RUBE, or RUBE and PIPPINS.)*

PIPPINS. Well, I'll give you a trial. You'll see all the prices on the menu card. We have no cash register at present.

RUBE. You needn't be in a hurry about putting one in on my account.

PIPPINS. I'll fix your salary when I know what you can do. What's your name?

RUBE. They call me Rube.

FLORA. Well, you look the part.

PIPPINS. Where do you belong?

RUBE. I don't belong anywhere. Got no parents, or home. I'm out hustling for myself.

*(While he talks he is constantly busy, straightening things up, putting pie on plates, etc., etc.)*

PIPPINS. You are an orphan?

RUBE. I guess so. I used to live on Jones's farm, at Gooseberry Corners. Maybe I was brought up in an incubator.

FLORA. Maybe you were brought up in an elevator. You're certainly the busy little thing, ain't you?

*(She arranges her stock of papers, singing as she does so.)*

PIPPINS. Well, start in at once! I'll return shortly and see how you are getting along.

*(Exit R. RUBE goes behind counter.)*

RUBE *(to FLORA)*. Say, you remind me of a girl up in the country. She was a regular music-box.

FLORA. Oh, you mean she had a sweet voice?

RUBE. Oh, no. She was just full of airs.

FLORA. Think you're smart, don't you? Say, I'll bet you don't know much—not even about the country!

RUBE. Oh, don't I?

FLORA. No, you don't. Why, there's those eggs. (*Points to counter.*) I'll bet you didn't notice they were all laid in the daytime.

RUBE (*laughing*). Aw, go 'way. Some of them weren't. What do you mean?

FLORA. I mean not one of those eggs was laid at night.

RUBE. How can you prove it?

FLORA. Why, chickens lay eggs only in the daytime. Because at night they're all roosters.

RUBE. Say, you're all right!

(*Smiles at her. Same business as before, FLORA looking haughty, then giggling.*)

FLORA. Well, I guess you'll get along here. But haven't you any new ideas—anything that will help to sell things to eat?

RUBE. I know a college yell that will advertise the oysters.

FLORA. What is it?

RUBE (*loudly*).

Hoorah-ray! Hoorah-roo!  
Oysters, oysters, in a stew  
O-Y-S-T-E-R-S  
Oysters, Oysters  
Raw, Raw, Raw!

FLORA (*enthusiastically*). That's the real thing.

(*CONDUCTOR appears at C. D., and shouts.*)

CONDUCTOR. Passengers for Ireland take the green cars on the Irish track. Passengers for Germany take the Sourkrout train on the Pretzel and Rousmit-'em railroad! A-l-l aboard!

(*RUBE looks startled and finally throws a loaf of bread at him. CONDUCTOR dodges out.*)

RUBE. Gee, Mame, they must keep that fellow out of here, or his voice will sour the milk.

(*Enter U. B. QUICK, a passenger in a hurry. He dashes down his valise and coat and runs to counter.*)

QUICK. Hurry up and wait on me, young man. I've

only got four minutes to eat and catch a train. I'm going to Pittsburg and I'm hungry. (*Yells.*) Hurry up! A slice of apple pie, a hard boiled egg, and a cup of coffee! (*Runs to C. D., as if looking for train and dashes back to counter.*) Say, move lively and give me what I ordered!

RUBE (*moving leisurely*). Fifty cents, please.

QUICK. Here you are!

*Hands money.* RUBE takes money and moves about in slow manner, while the excited passenger is hopping around from counter to C. D., and back again, yelling "Hurry up!" and RUBE going here and there as if looking for cups or the pie, etc., QUICK in great anger and frantic in his appeals and contortions, looking at the clock and his watch and running about. Clock hands go around rapidly. Finally RUBE puts pie and coffee on table before QUICK. Before he can eat or drink CONDUCTOR appears at door and shouts.)

CONDUCTOR. All aboard for Pittsburg!

(QUICK almost falls off chair. RUBE takes coffee back to counter.)

QUICK. Here—I haven't had a mouthful. Where's my money?

RUBE. What, the fifty cents? Oh, that was payable in advance.

QUICK. It's an outrage. I'll arrest you. I'll sue the company.

(Grabs up his valise. Bell heard off. Enter CONDUCTOR.)

CONDUCTOR. Hurry up, you'll miss the train.

(QUICK runs out C. D., followed by CONDUCTOR. Then QUICK returns for his forgotten coat, and runs out forgetting his valise. Then returns for the valise. CONDUCTOR runs in each time after him bidding him "hurry." This business must be lively. QUICK finally runs out, barely catching his train. RUBE laughs and takes the pie.)

RUBE. Say, Evelina, did you notice that gentleman forgot to eat his pie? (*Laughs and takes bite out of pie.*)

FLORA. My name's Flora—Flora Flip.

RUBE. You don't say? But nix on that last name!



FLORA. Humph! I like that. Why?

RUBE. 'Cause you're going to change it soon to mine.

FLORA. Well, of all the sassy—— (*Same business as before, smiles, etc.*) Say, Reddy, if you expect to get on here you've got to move faster. People expect their food the same day they order it. See? This ain't no up-country hash-house, son. This is a railroad lunch-counter. Now take the bell and get out and hustle for trade.

RUBE (*taking bell*). What do I do with it?

FLORA. Why, ring it.

RUBE. All right.

(*Begins to ring it in her ears, circling around her.*)

FLORA. Mercy, not in here. Ring it at the door, to draw in the passengers, and let them know lunch is ready.

RUBE. Uh-huh! Just watch me! (*He rings bell violently out door c., and yells, "First call for luncheon in the dining car," "This way for lunch," etc. Enter Two PASSENGERS with valises and packages. They throw their hats to RUBE who catches them, and hangs them up.*) Lunch, gentlemen?

PASSENGER. Sure. Say, son, we're in a hurry, so chase yourself, and——

RUBE. One dollar apiece, please.

PASSENGER. Here you are!

(*They hand him money. He at once gets very busy, pushes a chair under each PASSENGER with lightning speed, and tucks a napkin in each man's neck. Rushes behind counter, and brings pie, milk, etc. Rushes back and gets bread, knives, forks and plates, slams them down on table. Then dashes back, gets plate of soup, with very large spoon and puts it before one man and slaps him on the back as the man eats, causing him to spurt it out and choke.*)

RUBE. Take your time, gents, take your time. Bread, sir? Yes, sir. (*Hands bread.*) No hurry. Train leaves in three seconds. Hat, sir? Yes, sir. (*Brings their hats, claps them on their heads, pulls off napkins, puts valise in one PASSENGER'S hand and pushes both out c. d. FLORA stands looking at him in amazement. RUBE throws the remaining valise and packages out the door, walks back to counter and leans back against it.*) Oh, I don't know!

FLORA (*admiringly*). Say, you're a hustler!

RUBE. Well, Bright Eyes, when I want to, I can go some.

(*Takes bell, but before he can ring it HIST appears mysteriously from behind lunch-counter, R.*)

HIST (*gliding down to c.*). S-s-h! Not a word!

RUBE (*surprised*). Hello. Welcome to our city. Have some pie. Have a sandwich. Nice cake, and——

HIST (*mysteriously*). Young man, beware. My eye is on you.

RUBE (*nervously, as he looks down at his own shoulders, pretending to pick things off his sleeves, etc.*). You don't say? Well, take it off me, will you? I've only got this one suit.

HIST (*looking about R. and L.*). Are we alone? (RUBE follows him about, imitating him. They come down c.) Young man, you are going to make a noise in the world. A loud noise.

RUBE. Sure I am. (*Suddenly rings bell, which he has been carrying. HIST jumps and exits hurriedly c. d. RUBE goes up, shouting, "This way for lunch," etc. Enter CRIPPLE, c. d., on crutches. RUBE retreats before him.*) Hey! This isn't the hospital.

(CRIPPLE sits at table.)

FLORA. Newspapers? Magazines? Nobody's magazine—just in! Somebody's magazine—just out! Cigars, sir? Chewing-gum?

CRIPPLE. Don't want any.

(*He puts his crutches on the table. RUBE removes them.*)

RUBE. Please take your feet off the table.

CRIPPLE. Give me a beefsteak smothered in onions. (RUBE runs behind counter and yells, as if to a cook, off R., "Pork and——") I don't want pork and beans, I want beefsteak and onions, two fried eggs, French fried potatoes, stewed celery, sliced tomatoes and pickled beets.

RUBE. You can order what you like, but all you'll get is pork and beans. (*Fixes stuff on plate and brings it to CRIPPLE.*) One dollar, please, and ten cents extra for a fork.



CRIPPLE. I want what I ordered.

RUBE. Now, why waste valuable time telling me what you'd like to eat? There's your lunch. Get busy. One dollar and ten cents, please.

(CRIPPLE *pays money and begins to eat.* CONDUCTOR *appears at door c.*)

CONDUCTOR. All aboard for trains going to Oompah! Wumpooah! and O-o-mpah.

(RUBE *catches up a sandwich and is about to throw it, when CONDUCTOR skips out c.* RUBE *rings the bell and MOSES SLAVINSKY enters with peddler's outfit as RUBE shouts, "This way, sir."*)

MOSES (*smiling cheerfully*). Collar-buttons, shoe-strings, neckties and suspenders? (*To FLORA.*) Pins, lady—ribbons?

FLORA (*imitating his motions*). Newspapers? Magazines? Buy the new "Ladies' Home Disturber" for your wife.

RUBE (*also imitating his motions*). Pies? Cakes? Take home a fry in a box?

MOSES (*smiling*). Nothing doing—hey?

RUBE. We're too busy to buy here. But we can sell you a couple of yards of sandwich. How about a dozen nice fresh pork and beans?

MOSES. Say, von't you gif me a little bite of somethings for nothings?

RUBE. Not a bite!

MOSES. Shust a bite, mine friend!

RUBE. Look here. Did you see that dog outside the door?

MOSES (*nervously looking around*). Yes.

RUBE. Well, we keep him there so that tramps and bums can get a bite outside without interfering with our regular trade. See?

MOSES (*smiling*). Oh, vell, I guess I have to buy somethings, then.

RUBE. Now you're talking business. What'll you have?

MOSES. How much for a sandwich?

RUBE. These are ten cents. These over here are last week's—three cents.

MOSES. All right—I'll take a bargain sandwich! (*Pays money and takes sandwich, and tries to chew it.*) Oh! Have you got a hatchet so I can break the bread?

RUBE. Don't bother me when I'm busy.

(*MOSES tries to chew the sandwich ad lib. grimaces and twists himself into queer positions.*)

MOSES. I can't bite this. Vot iss it?

FLORA. Oh, my goodness. You gave him the sample sandwich!

RUBE. So I did. (*He takes sandwich from MOSES and lets it drop. Loud crash as it hits the floor.*) Well, wouldn't that jar you? Here, try this.

(*Hands second sandwich to MOSES, who bites into it.*)

MOSES (*choking*). Oh, I'm choking!

CRIPPLE. My goodness, the man's dying! Let me out of here. Give him some water.

RUBE (*as he and FLORA slap MOSES on the back*). What's the matter?

MOSES. I swallowed some of my collar buttons.

FLORA. Oh, is that all? Well, swallow a handful of buttonholes and you'll be all right.

MOSES. Thank you, lady. I feel better. Vot kind of a sandwich iss this?

RUBE. That? Oh, that's a ham sandwich!

MOSES. Oh, Rebecca and Abraham, I'm poisoned! (*Spits it out ad lib., and crosses to news stand.*) Have you got a Hebrew paper?

FLORA. No. Are you especially stuck on the Hebrew paper?

MOSES. Yes, miss.

FLORA. Well, I'll sell you a sheet of fly-paper, and you'll be stuck on that.

MOSES. I guess I don'd vant any. (*To FLORA.*) Want to buy any hairpins, stick-pins, scarf-pins, tenpins, side-combs? (*FLORA shakes her head at each offer.*) Powder puffs? (*FLORA looks interested.*) Hair goods? Nice puffs (*holding up false hair*), curls, ringlets, braids, rolls, rats.

CRIPPLE. Rats! Where, where? Dear me, let me out of here. (*Runs out C. D., without his crutches, and in again immediately.*) Didn't I forget something?

RUBE. Here's your feet.

CRIPPLE. Oh, thanks.

*(Adjusts crutches, and hobbles out painfully.)*

MOSES *(to FLORA, who has been looking at puffs, etc.)*. Buy a little hair, lady. Very cheap.

FLORA. Oh, I don't know. *(Takes hairpins and puffs from MOSES' tray, and pins puffs on.)* How do I look?

RUBE. You're a dream, Claribel. With all thy false *(pointing to her hair)* I love thee still.

MOSES. Buy a coronet braid, lady. *(Holds up braid.)* Fine. Cheap. Only sixteen cents!

FLORA *(taking it)*. Oh, I don't know.

RUBE. Sure, buy it, Isabel. When you get tired of it we can use it in the soup.

*(Business of pretending to take a hair out of a plate on the table.)*

FLORA. All right. I'll take it. *(Pins on braid.)* Got any curls?

MOSES. Sure. *(Holds up curls. FLORA pins them on.)* My, my, you vas svell. You look like you growed on them—I mean they growed on you.

*(HIST, the detective, suddenly jumps up from behind news stand, L., and glides down c.)*

HIST. 'Tis false.

FLORA. Sir! What is false?

HIST. The rumor that Pippins' son is found! But I am on his trail. I—Sherlock Hist, the boy detective! Light sleuthing done and divorces secured with neatness and despatch. I work for our best families. Allow me.

*(Hands cards around rapidly and exit, R.)*

MOSES *(frightened)*. Mein gracious! Who vas dat feller? Pay me my money and let me oudt of here—quick.

FLORA *(pointing to hair)*. How much for the lot?

MOSES. Ninety-eight cents.

FLORA. Here you are. *(Pays him.)* Now this is all my own hair.

*(MOSES rushes up to door c., and collides with BILES, the stuttering man, who is entering.)*

BILES (*stuttering*). Look—out—where—you're—g-g-going! (*Comes down to table.*) W-w-waiter!

RUBE (*coming to him*). What do you want?

BILES (*stuttering*). I—w-w-w-want—the—b-b-bill—of—f-f-fare.

RUBE. Hurry up and talk! What is it you want?

BILES (*stuttering*). The—bill—of—f-f-fare.

RUBE (*stuttering*). Ain't g-g-got—any. We're j-j-just out of it. Blamed if he hasn't got me stuttering, too.

FLORA. He w-w-w-wants the bill of f-f-fare. Tell him to order p-p-pork and b-b-beans or get out.

RUBE. All we've got is pork and beans—order that or get out.

BILES. All r-r-right, g-give me that.

(RUBE goes behind counter as DEAF MAN enters door c., comes down and sits at same table with BILES, knocks on table with his cane.)

FLORA. Here! Make less noise over there. This isn't a boiler factory.

(RUBE comes to DEAF MAN, who puts speaking-trumpet to his ear.)

RUBE. What do you want?

(DEAF MAN motions to RUBE to shout into trumpet.)

FLORA. He wants you to talk into the megaphone.

RUBE (*shouting in horn*). Say—what do you want? (*Then louder.*) What do you want? (*Pauses and then yells.*) What—do—you—want?

DEAF MAN. Oh—yes,—been very warm!

FLORA. Speak up, so the gentleman can hear you!

RUBE (*roaring into horn*). What—do—you—want—to—eat? (DEAF MAN nods.)

DEAF MAN. A little closer to the 'phone, please.

RUBE (*bracing himself*). What—do—you—want? (DEAF MAN shakes his head, then RUBE speaks to BILES.) What does this fellow want, anyway?

BILES (*stuttering*). He—w-w-wants—s-s-something—to—eat.

RUBE (*to FLORA; leaning over table R., he shouts at the top of his voice, and also stutters. She does the same in*

*replying and leans over table L.*) S-s-say, G-Geraldine, these f-fellows have g-got me g-g-going.

FLORA (*shouting*). Don't s-s-shout at me. I ain't d-d-deaf. (*BILES is frightened and runs out C. D. followed by DEAF MAN. RUBE and FLORA run up after them. FLORA still shouts.*) Now you've done it. Driving away— (*suddenly comes down to natural voice*) all the customers.

RUBE. Oh, good riddance. (*Throws himself into chair, down R. C., and fans himself with his apron.*) 'This place has Gooseberry Corners faded to a frazzle for excitement. My nerves are all gone. Say, Babette —

FLORA. You mean Flora.

RUBE. Oh, yes, Flora. Say—soothe me to sleep, won't you? Read me the (*name of local paper*). Can't you do something amusing?

FLORA. Sure, I can.

(*Specialty, during which HIST enters R., and sits down R. RUBE and FLORA do not see him enter.*)

RUBE (*at end of specialty*). That's great, Gwendolyn—I mean Flora. If it wasn't for you I wouldn't stay here a — (*Sees HIST.*) Why, hello, Willy! Want lunch? No? Then run home to mamma!

HIST (*removing false beard*). I am Hist, the detective.

FLORA. I didn't see you come in.

HIST. It's a habit I have. (*Rises.*) Beware. The time is not yet.

(*Tiptoes with exaggerated air of mystery up L. RUBE and FLORA follow him, also on tiptoe. Exit HIST, L., and the others come down.*)

(*Enter KRONSKIPPEL, C. D.*)

RUBE. Wie geht's, Germany. Come in.

(*They lead him over to counter. RUBE takes off KRONSKIPPEL'S hat and lays it on end of counter.*)

FLORA. We're just out of sourkrout. What will you have? Want a paper? Full account of the (*name some recent event of local interest*).

KRONSKIPPEL. I vant a nize piece of abble pie.

RUBE. Say, I don't know one kind of pie from another. Pick it out for yourself. Ten cents, please! (*KRONSKIPPEL*

pays money, takes a large bite out of a slice of pie, and hands the rest of the slice to RUBE, who looks at it critically.) Is it apple pie? (KRONSKIPPEL shakes his head, and seizes another piece. RUBE drops the piece he holds into KRONSKIPPEL'S hat. He may drop it behind counter, but it must appear to go in hat.) Is that apple pie?

KRONSKIPPEL (taking from mouth two buttons and a hairpin). No, I guess dot vas peach pie already. (Bites into several more slices, RUBE asking questions and dropping pieces into the hat.) Vell, I guess I don't vant abble pie. I vant vat you call dose mince pie—yes?

RUBE. All right—here you are. (Puts hat on KRONSKIPPEL'S head, and crushes it down.) Now, that's mince pie!

KRONSKIPPEL (wildly). Oh, mein prains is mixed mit dem fifty-seven varieties already. Help!

(He rushes out C. D., jumping over HIST, the detective, who is crawling in through C. D. HIST enters, rises, goes to RUBE and FLORA and leads them down C.)

HIST. S-s-h!—I have news of the greatest importance. Young man, your name is Reuben.

(Looks around cautiously, and takes off beard.)

RUBE. Say, old sport, how did you guess it?

HIST. I am Hist—the detective. I come high, but they must have me. S-s-h. I am a specialist. (Specialty by HIST, if desired.) Young man, did you not live with the late Farmer Jones, of Gooseberry Corners?

RUBE. The late Farmer Jones? Is he dead?

HIST. Yes. The sad news seems to shock you.

RUBE. It does. It does. He owed me four dollars and nineteen cents back wages.

HIST (taking RUBE'S hand). S-s-h! Not a word. My dear young friend, your fortune is made. I have made it.

RUBE. Well, well. Flora, what do you think of that? Say, old man, could you lend me a little something—say ten dollars—on account?

HIST. Be patient. All shall be revealed in good time. (Puts on false beard and wig.) S-s-h! (Tiptoes off L.)

FLORA. Say, I'm going to do something horrid to that man before long. He's no lady.

(Enter PIPPINS, R.)



PIPPINS. Well, how are you getting on?

RUBE. Splendid! You'll be a bankrupt before night. I've had a run on pies.

PIPPINS. Go into the cold storage room and get some of those third grade eggs. There's a picnic party coming on the next train.

RUBE. All right. You look after the apple pie department. (*Exit, R.*)

(*Enter HIST, L.*)

HIST. One moment, Mr. Pippins. Our office has been in search of the boy you lost years ago.

PIPPINS. Oh! You have news? You are on that case?

HIST. Yes, I'm working on that case. I find that the child was sent West from an orphan asylum—taken by a farmer called John Jones, and—pardon me a moment. (*Slips out L. While this is going on MOSES enters C. D., gathers up pies and cakes and goes out C. D., FLORA screaming and trying to call PIPPINS' attention to the theft. PIPPINS runs out C. D. to overtake MOSES. HIST returns L.*) S-s-h! That may be the long lost son. I'm on his track!

(*Slips out C. D., as RUBE enters R. and goes up and rings the bell.*)

(*Enter WIDOW with MAMMA'S BOY, C. D.*)

WIDOW (*to RUBE*). Young man, you don't look religious to me. Are you a Methodist or a Baptist?

RUBE. No, ma'am. I'm a Democrat.

WIDOW. Do you keep the commandments?

RUBE (*briskly*). Oh, yes, ma'am. We keep everything like that. How will you have them—hot or cold?

WIDOW. Don't you get gay with me, young feller.

(*Boy makes a dash toward counter and RUBE grabs him.*)

RUBE. Confound that kid!

WIDOW. And don't you swear before me, young man!

RUBE. Oh, excuse me; I didn't know you wanted to swear first.

WIDOW. Sir!

BOY. Oh, Ma! Look at the peanuts!

(*He eludes RUBE, rushes for counter, and climbs up to get*

*a bag of peanuts. RUBE has trouble taking bag from him. The overgrown boy cries bitterly and calls for his "mamma," who wipes his nose and tries to pacify him. RUBE wants to put BOY out, but WIDOW threatens him.)*

WIDOW. Coward, would you strike a che-ild? Don't put your hands on that baby.

CONDUCTOR (*at door*). Train for the orphan asylum—all aboard! Orphan asylum, lady?

WIDOW. Orphan asylum, indeed?

*(Threatens him with umbrella.)*

CONDUCTOR (*backing away*). Well, really, madam, I thought —

WIDOW. I want you to understand that my poor dear dead husband never dared talk back to me, and neither can you. Hit him, baby, hit him for mamma!

*(BOY hits and kicks CONDUCTOR, while WIDOW hits him with umbrella. All three exeunt, C. D. RUBE follows them, ringing bell.)*

*(Enter PIPPINS and HIST, C. D.)*

RUBE. Gee, that was awful! Say, Mr. Pippins, this place is too exciting for me. My nerves are weak. I'm discharged. No more of this for me. Hang out your sign for another boy.

HIST. Stop! I have trailed you here. The secret is out. You are this man's long lost son!

*(RUBE jumps into PIPPINS' arms.)*

RUBE. Me father! *(Funny embrace.)*

PIPPINS *(with mock emotion)*. My boy, my boy!

*(RUBE goes to FLORA, while PIPPINS goes to HIST.)*

FLORA. Oh, Rube, ain't it grand?

RUBE. Well, a depot lunch-counter ain't much of an ancestral inheritance, Angelina—I mean Flora, but I've got you, anyway.

*(She falls into his arms. Her face appears over his shoulder. She is still chewing gum.)*

FLORA. Oh, you Rube!



PIPPINS (*to HIST*). Say, honest now, is that (*pointing to RUBE*) the best you could do for the money?

HIST. Well, you know I rather favored the peddler for the long lost son, but you wouldn't stand for it.

PIPPINS. That's so. Well, it might be worse! (*Crosses to RUBE and FLORA.*) Bless you, my children!

FLORA. Oh, you Poppa!

PIPPINS (*taking bell and ringing it at C. D.*). Let's celebrate! Come in, everybody! Free, all free! It's on me! Come in and help yourselves, good people, to anything on the Depot Lunch-Counter!

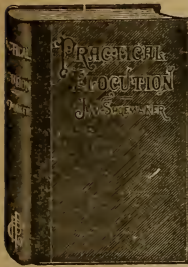
(*Music. All the characters enter, pushing and cheering.*

PIPPINS *joins the hands of FLORA and RUBE, and spreads his hands over their heads. MOSES and BOY grab food from counter and sit down R. and L., eating it hastily.*)

CURTAIN



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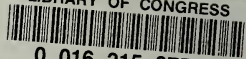
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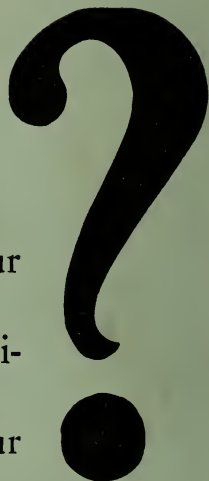
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